

# The Non-Subscribing Presbyterian.

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## Notes of the Month.

THE proceedings of the Church Conference which was held last month in Belfast were of interest not only to Episcopalians but also to the members of all Christian communities. Those responsible for the arrangement of the meetings managed to find place for topics which concerned the earnest and thoughtful of every church—ourselves no less than our more orthodox friends. The claims of the living present, the influence of modern scholarship upon ancient conceptions, the church in relation to the world, the prospects and possibilities of Christian union—all these were questions of vital importance which no body of people alert to read the signs of the times could afford to ignore. Hence it was a clear proof of

wisdom that even more time was allotted to these matters than to those of less general interest. Moreover, those entrusted with the reading of the papers were singularly frank and fearless in their admissions. It was clearly perceived that biblical criticism cannot be summarily disposed of as unreasonable or irreligious, as was once deemed possible. The questions at issue must be decided within the domain of scholarship rather than in the sphere of dogma. To admit that is to take common ground with the most thoughtful of every church and to make possible a closer unity of aim and purpose.

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Even more significant, however, were the pronouncements made by several speakers concerning the supreme object of the church. According to the chairman (Bishop Crozier) the church has a two-fold mission :—(1) to produce right relations between God and man ; (2) to produce right relations between man and man. There is no branch of the Christian church which would not accept these as its own fundamental aims. Do we not really mean the same when we lay stress on the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man ? If then the recognition of a common aim be all-important and everything else be subsidiary why is Christian re-union so long delayed ? That is the question which it behoves all of us to face and, if possible, to answer in such a way as to secure the results we desire. If the recent Church Conference has done any-

thing to give prominence to the question then assuredly it was not held in vain.

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We are glad to learn that the Ballyhemlin congregation has decided upon a successor to the Rev. Charles Thrift, who left to take up Domestic Mission work in Birmingham. We hope that the ministry of the Rev. John Barron will be rich in blessing for himself and for his people. His previous experience at Tavistock and Ashton-under-Lyne in England should stand him in good stead when he comes to this country. If Ballyclare can only find a fitting successor to the Rev. William Fielding we should then have all our pulpits occupied. May that soon be the case.

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#### THE DISSENTERS' CHAPELS BILL, 1844.

By Rev. James Kennedy.

HE preaching of liberalism in Religion has had the unintended consequence at Doncaster of causing the eviction of the minister of the Congregational Church there and the great majority of his congregation from their House of Worship. They have been evicted, not because a New Theology was proclaimed from the pulpit, but because certain other doctrines specified in the Trust Deed were not so taught. For it is fact, plainly stated in the nineteenth century, some years since that while many so-called Free Churches in England ostensibly repudiate subscription to Creeds and Confessions, the Trust Deeds by which their Chapels are held, set forth certain doctrines—generally undiluted Calvinism—which the Trustees are to cause to be regularly taught. The Doncaster case will remind some of the peril in which our Meeting Houses and Church property generally, in England and Ireland, stood until the passing in Parliament of the Act mentioned. When Protestantism more or less replaced Roman Catholicism it was enacted by law, under penalties, that all and sundry should worship in the churches of the establishment, and according to a prescribed Prayer Book; and when Toleration came in and Protestant Dissenters generally were permitted to worship in churches of their own, their ministers were compelled to sign the Doctrinal Articles of the Established Church before exercising their ministry, though subsequently a virtual assent came to be accepted. But from the benefit of this Toleration such as it was, Unitarians were expressly excluded, except during a brief period in the reign of King James II., who arbitrarily, and that he might effect toleration for Romanists, proclaimed liberty of conscience “to all persons

of what persuasion whatever.” Not till 1813, by the passing of the Trinity Act, were restrictions removed, and Unitarians in England enabled to worship God according to their consciences without let or hindrance, or licence of Bishop. Four years later the benefit of the Act was extended to Ireland, and this relief we owe mainly to the exertions of Mr. Wm. Smith, grandfather of the late Miss Florence Nightingale.

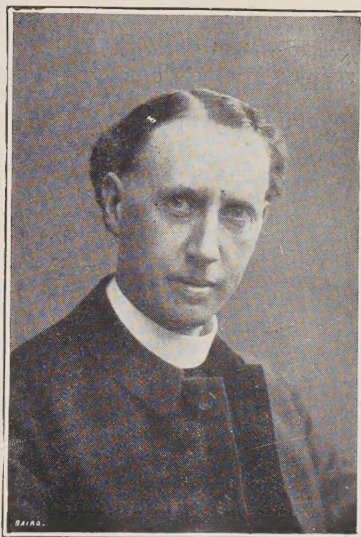
In the meantime Chapels, as they are called in England, Meeting Houses, as we call them in Ireland, were built, sums of money set apart for religious and charitable purposes, and whatever may have been the theological sentiments of the landlord who granted the site, or of those who united their efforts in erecting a House of Prayer for their own immediate comfort and convenience, or whether there was a simple desire not to trammel their successors and descendants, the Trust Deed, as a rule, simply conveyed the property to be used for the worship of God. Confining our attention for the present to Ireland we find that Francis Annesley, by a Deed of Gift, dated 13th May, 1736, conveyed the Meeting House and property “to the sole use and benefit of the Protestant Dissenting Congregation of Drumca, now Clough, for the time being, and for all succeeding congregations of Protestant Dissenters or Presbyterians, who, from time to time, shall meet and assemble at the said Meeting House, in order to worship God for ever.” This congregation had been founded about 1687, and after a succession of ministers, a difference of opinion arose in 1829 over the selection of a successor to Rev. William Campbell, who, without doubt, was at least an Arian, the congregation being under the jurisdiction of the Presbytery of Bangor, in connection with the General Synod. One section desired to invite the Rev. David Watson, the other preferred the Rev. Francis Dill. The conflict became unusually embittered, and smarting under alleged partiality displayed by Synod and their tyranny in wrenching the congregation from under the charge of the Presbytery of Bangor and placing it under the care of a Committee of Synod, those in favour of Mr. Watson joined the Presbytery of Antrim by whom Mr. Watson was ordained.

After many exciting and regrettable incidents, both parties retired by agreement from occupancy of the Meeting House until the law should decide the question of ownership.

The following sentences occurring in the judgment delivered by the Lord Chief Baron will sufficiently indicate the result and the reasons thereof. “In deciding upon the case the evidence requires us to ascertain the principles and doctrines entertained by the Presbyterians of that time” (1736). We find clearly upon the whole of the evidence that the original principles certainly were those of the Established Church. Although their discipline differed from it, their doctrines wer-

in accordance with it. The principle article of their faith, belief in the Trinity, appears to have been universal at the time." "It was true that they were subject to penalties if they did not profess that belief by the two Acts of Uniformity." "In 1719 the Act of Toleration was enacted and by this Act Presbyterians were protected in the free exercise of their religion. But here it was also enacted that those who either preached or wrote against the doctrine of the Trinity should be deprived of it or excepted out of the benefit of toleration, and, therefore, those who maintained these, actually continued an illegal body and were still subject to the Acts of Uniformity." As to these Acts it may be said that in the reign of Edward VI., the Lord Deputy of Ireland was authorised to abolish the mass and introduce the English Book of Common Prayer. Shortly before his death there was drawn up a second Prayer Book enlarged and revised. At the accession of Queen Elizabeth the Prayer Book underwent a fresh revision and was ordered to be read in all churches throughout Ireland. If any clergyman refused to do so for the first offence he was to forfeit one year's income and to be imprisoned six months; if he offended again he would be deprived of his cure and imprisoned for a year. As to the laity, *all persons* also on Sundays and holidays were ordered to resort to the Parish Churches and there to abide orderly during the service of God on pain of the censures of the Church, *horresco referens*, and a fine of twelve pence—no inconsiderable sum in those days—to be levied by the churchwardens in aid of the poor." As to the second Act of Uniformity, Act passed in 1662, Principal Gordon tells us in his lecture on Baxter that in the year mentioned King Charles II. issued a Declaration embodying a comprehensive scheme of Church Order, confirming Episcopacy, but enlarging the number of Bishops; depriving Bishops of arbitrary authority, associating presbyters with them in every official act, including ordination, appointing local Synods, leaving ceremonies optional, abolishing subscription, promising a revision of the Prayer Book, making its use discretionary and lastly renewing the pledge of liberty to tender consciences. But the Puritans could not be conciliated, the olive branch was rejected by them and by Parliament, to be followed by the Act of 1662, the nature of which may be gathered from the objections of the Puritans as stated by Principal Gordon. They were (a) Necessity of Episcopal Ordination; (b) Renunciation of the League and Covenant as in itself an unlawful oath; and (c) Subscription of Assent and Consent to all and everything contained in and prescribed by the New Prayer Book. The effect of the Act was to empty more than 2,000 pulpits in England, 38 in the Diocese of Down and Connor, 8 in that of Clogher, and 13 in Raphoe.

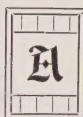
(To be continued)



REV. E. A. VOYSEY, M.A.

## ALL SOULS' CHURCH, BELFAST.

Installation of Rev. E. A. Voysey, M.A.



SPECIAL Service was held on Wednesday, October 5th, in All Souls' Church, Belfast, for the installation of Rev. Ellison A. Voysey, M.A., who has accepted the unanimous call of the congregation to the charge up till recently filled by Rev. W. H. Drummond, B.A. The service was largely attended by members of the congregation and clergymen of kindred churches. After the opening hymn a scripture lesson was read by Rev. John Dare Davies, who subsequently preached an instructive and interesting sermon. Rev. William Napier gave an exposition of Presbyterian Church government, and put the prescribed questions to the minister and congregation. Rev. E. A. Voysey, in a brief statement, intimated his acceptance of the call. Rev. M. S. Dunbar having delivered the installation prayer, the hymn "Thou Lord of Hosts whose guiding Hand" was sung, after which Rev. Joseph Wood delivered the charge to the minister, and Rev. H. J. Rossington the charge to the congrega-

gation. The service concluded with the pronouncement of the benediction.

Subsequently a large company were entertained to luncheon in Rosemary Hall. Dr. John Campbell presided. The loyal toast having been duly received, the Chairman proposed the health of the New Minister. On behalf of the congregation he extended to Mr. Voysey a hearty welcome, and he trusted that his stay amongst them might be long and happy.

Rev. E. A. Voysey, M.A., in responding said when he first came to preach at All Souls' he had not the slightest idea that he should subsequently be asked to become their minister, and when the suggestion was very quietly put to him he felt bound to give a negative reply, because he was very happy in his church at Northampton, and he had a busy and hard-working congregation. But he was pressed to come to Belfast, and the more he heard from the people the more he was convinced that they desired him to undertake the pastorate. It seemed to him that there was something they needed which he could give, and that was why he eventually accepted the call which the congregation so kindly and unanimously gave him. On first coming to All Souls' he must confess that he felt there was nobody there. He felt that he had come to a dead and dying cause, but he was told that the people were all away on their holidays then, and that they would return in October. Well, they had now all got back, and he was hoping that they would now go on swimmingly. He thanked them for the kind way in which they had received this toast, and hoped they would spend many happy years together.

Mr. John Rogers, in proposing the toast of "The Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland and Success to the New Organisation," said the Non-Subscribing Church had only been in existence a few months. They stood without any animosity or ill-feeling towards any of their neighbours of other denominations. They stood for liberty of conscience and for the right of private judgment

Rev. Edgar Lockett, responding, said in England and other places they had free and independent churches, but he did not know of another case in any country where they could find a free church community made up of churches not committed to any doctrinal tests, and left perfectly free in that respect. He thought that the achievement of the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church was one of which in Ireland they had reason to be proud.

Rev. E. I. Fripp proposed the toast of "Prosperity to All Souls'"; and Mr. J. M. Dickson, replying, said he thought they were fortunate in having been able to secure the services of their minister. He had already given them evidence of his earnestness and energy, and had made hosts of friends. They had great confidence in the future of their Church. He had considerable labour before him, but he could assure Mr. Voysey that in his work he would receive the sympathy and support of the members of the congregation in general.

The toast of "Our Co-religionists" was proposed by Mr. Shannon Millin, and responded to by Rev. R. W. Seaver and Rev. Dr. Purves. Mr. J. E. Barker briefly proposed the toast of "Our Guests." The Right Honourable Thos. Andrews, in responding, said he felt that in electing a successor to Mr. Drummond the Committee could not have made a better choice than they had done nor one more likely to increase the membership of their church and its general usefulness. He was glad that Mr. Seaver and Dr. Purves were present with them on that interesting occasion. They had set an example to other Churches, which had not always been followed in the past.

A largely attended social reunion was held in the evening in Rosemary Hall. A programme of music was supplied, and congratulatory addresses were delivered at intervals in the course of the evening.

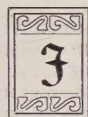
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True greatness consists in being great in little things.—*Johnson.*

## For the Children.

### DO WHAT YOU CAN.

By Rev. G. L. Phelps.



**F**WONDER how many of you remember the story of Naaman, the Syrian captain, and how his leprosy was cured. There are one or two things in that story which seem to be meant especially for little boys and girls. How did it come about that Naaman heard of Elisha and his power to cure? Why, just because a little girl, who had been snatched away from her home and parents to be made a slave, was not so much taken up with her misfortunes as to miss a chance of making others happy. She was only a wee lassie, but she was able to be a great help to "a mighty man of valour." Then again, Naaman very nearly missed being cured after all because of his offended dignity; he didn't realise the importance of small duties until a servant came to him and said:—"If the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldst thou not have done it? How much rather then, when he saith unto thee, Wash, and be clean?"

Here are two lessons for us. (1) No matter how small and weak we may be, no matter how great our own misfortunes, we can find someone who needs our help, someone we can make happy. (2) A duty may seem to be very small and unimportant when really great things depend upon its being done. Don't be discouraged because your powers and your opportunities are small; both will grow larger if you use them to the full. Don't be careless when your duties are small; if you want to be entrusted with great and honourable tasks you must prove your worth by doing small ones well.

Now let me tell you a story which will make my meaning clear. Once upon a time, in a far country, there lived a king who had governed his people wisely and well for fifty years. The time had ar-

rived for the celebration of his jubilee and the people assembled in a great meeting to decide what present they should give him as a mark of their love and loyalty. One suggested that they should build him a new palace, but that would not do for it would cost more than they could afford. Then it was proposed to erect a statue, but there was no sculptor among them and it would cost too much to bring one from a foreign land. All sorts of things were suggested but always there was the same difficulty, they could not afford it. This was not altogether because the people were mean, they were really poor. At last a wise old man got up and said, "My good friends, none of us is rich, but if we unite and each does his share we can give the king a present worthy of the occasion. He knows we are poor and lack the skill to accomplish works of art, he will not expect anything great or expensive, yet there is something we can do which will be acceptable to him as a token of our love. Every house in this little kingdom has growing on its walls a grape vine; let everyone gather the finest cluster of grapes from his vine and press the juice from them; let us make a huge cask and each bring his contribution of grape juice; we shall then have a great quantity of delicious wine, a worthy gift for the king."

This speech was loudly applauded, the difficulty was solved, only a small thing was asked of each, yet the combined effort would produce a splendid result. They decided to carry out this plan, the meeting broke up and the men went home and told their wives all about it.

The cask was made, the people brought their bottles and poured the contents into it. The king was called out from his palace, and the chief citizens made fine speeches telling the king how much the people loved him and asking him to accept the cask of wine with their best wishes. The king was very pleased and thanked the people from the bottom of his heart, then he sent his butler into the palace to fetch the best goblet. The goblet was brought, the tap was turned,

and the king drank to the health of his loyal subjects. No sooner had he tasted than he became very angry, for it was not wine that had come out of the cask but just water.

How did this happen? Ever, one of those people on reaching home after the meeting began to think in this way,—“One small bottle of grape juice will never be missed in so large a cask, one small bottle of water will never be noticed. I will keep the grapes for myself and no one will be any the wiser.” As they all had the same thought that their little share would not matter, of course the cask got filled with water instead of wine.

No matter how small it may be we must each do our part. That is what my story and the story of Naaman should teach.

## SUNDAY MORNING SOLILOQUIES OF HEZEKIAH GOODENOUGH.

Recorded by Rev. W. S. Smith.

### SOME KNOTTY POINTS.

HERE I am at home as usual, while all good folk are at meeting. It is too bad. I haven't yet turned over a new leaf as I ought to have done. Some of my neighbours who are much interested in my private concerns, will be saying—“Oh, yes, Hezekiah Goodenough may talk as he likes about the devil, say this, that, and the other about him, but we know him to be a busy bishop in his own diocese, and—”; but it doesn't matter what they say, I'm advised as much as the old man with the ass. I think, however, I must give up racking my poor old brain over these knotty theological questions, though what I have done in this way will perhaps prove useful to me. I shall surely be better able to detect and define if necessary, my own theological whereabouts, as well as that of any candid friend, and that will count for something. But my conscience tells me that I ought to go to meeting and indulge in soliloquising some other day rather than Sunday. And perhaps I should have gone only several questions have been chasing one another like ghosts that want “laying,” through my brain during a good part of the past week, and I must confess I haven't had much peace on account of them.

One is that of *Calvinism*—election and reprobation. This is an awful doctrine, not fit

in my humble opinion, for any sane creature to entertain. To think that God, out of the millions of millions of souls that have passed through, and are still passing through, the world, should have determined to reserve only a few, and those not necessarily of the best, for the enjoyment of eternal felicity, while all the rest are to be turned into hell, and this through no fault of their own! Why, it's dreadful! The *Confession of Faith* talks of “the comfortable presence of God,” but it seems to me marvellous how any one could regard his presence as “comfortable,” when, according to this doctrine he “sends an to Heaven and ten to Hell,” all for his own glory. This is a truly startling dogma. From a bountiful Creator, from a Heavenly Father, it converts God into a ruthless tyrant, with attributes of an infinite, but remorselessly sanguinary and fiendish character. With the awful thought of such a doctrine oppressing me as nightmare, I should believe that when it rained, the heavens in sympathy, were shedding tears, that lightning was a display of God's wrath, that the earth and all life, was branded with the curse of God. Oh, what gloomy, miserable, love abolishing heresy, is here! A mother may persuade herself that she is among the elect, while her darling child, whom she has borne and nourished, is doomed to be lost—to be one of the reprobate! A husband may foster the notion that his salvation is sure, while his wife stands on the brink of the burning pit and is ready to fall in, because the Lord has passed her by. Would heaven be worth calling heaven under such conditions as these? Would it not be another hell? To me it would. And yet, the upholders of this doctrine, apparently forgetful of the fate that possibly awaits them and their prospective offspring, go on marrying and giving in marriage. They deserve hanging.

And is this the precious Gospel of Jesus Christ? Is this a glorious message of peace and goodwill to men? Is it not rather a Gospel of Hate? Instead of being good news from our eternal home, it is about the worst that could have been brought. It is destructive of the true peace of man; it envelopes nature in eternal gloom; it converts the Heavenly Father into a ruthless despot, an omnipotent fiend. It is a doctrine that is degrading to man, dishonouring to God, worthy only of the Devil, if there is such an omniscient monster. Rather than believe such a doctrine, I would prefer faith in annihilation. “Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely.” “The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works.” “The Lord is good to all and his tender mercies are over all his works.” How comforting these gleams of light after gazing upon the horrible decrees of Calvinism!

And what must be the moral effects of this doctrine? Since, according to it, the die is cast before we breathe the breath of life, the question of a virtuous or vicious life, is a perfectly useless one. The virtuous upholders

of this doctrine will experience no incentive to virtue unless they love it for its own sake, while the vicious, the sinful, the criminal upholders or professors, feeling perhaps that they are born to be damned, will be led to say: "It is of no use our trying to be upright, true, good, when it is to our worldly interest to be otherwise, let us eat and drink for to-morrow we shall die ' the death of the ungodly, and be cast into hell ! " Said John Wesley on this subject—"Supposing one in twenty of mankind is elected, then nineteen out of twenty are reprobated; the elect shall be saved, do what they will; the reprobate shall be damned, do what they can."

Another knotty point is that of *Salvation by Faith* alone. It seems to me as I look back at his chequered career, that the great endeavour of Jesus was to turn men from the error of their ways, by implanting in their hearts better principles, better motives than those by which they were then guided. Certainly, his strongest denunciations were directed against evil doers, and I do not think he would have told one of his disciples guilty of hypocrisy, robbery, or other vice or crime, that belief in him alone as a teacher of divine things, would meet with his approbation, and the "Well done," of his Heavenly Father. No, "faith, if it hath not works is dead, being alone." I consider that is the only saving faith which saves us from our sins and their consequences, and impels us to endeavour to do our duty to God and man. This is an active, vital sort of faith, such as Jesus himself held, who declared his convictions more by his deeds than his words.

And this notion of faith, without its necessary consequences, works, being regarded as sufficient in the sight of God, seems to me like a one-legged stool—never safe to rest upon. And yet it has its conveniences, and mighty great ones too, for the careless, idle, godless, and immoral. Sometimes doing right is not very pleasant. Sometimes it is rather annoying to have to earn one's living. "It is troublesome," said a woman who used to knock at our door, "and I couldna be fashed," and so she preferred begging to working. Sometimes it is inconvenient to forgive one's enemy, to pay one's debts, to break one's self of a degrading habit, to face the "nots" in the commandments. But according to this doctrine, I may say—"No matter, I'll stick to sound believing ' and heaven will be mine." I have in my time known some very faith-full souls, who would furtively glance around them and then stoop to dishonour, to degradation; people who would stuff a false bottom into a pint measure, put a penny beneath the scale, all the best potatoes at the top of the bag, lard among the butter, and then go to meeting and cry—"Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved!" Yes, this doctrine of "sound believing" in conjunction with "three-mile prayers and half-mile graces," but apart from righteous conduct, is a most convenient and agreeable doctrine. It will

encourage a man who practices all sorts of villainy to hold on to the last—no not exactly the last, but until he thinks he is about to die. Then he will bless himself, and piously ejaculate—"Lord, I believe!" and, *hey presto*, he is transformed into a model Christian, and is fit for the society of the purest angels. And so this doctrine leads to wonderful death-bed repentances, and marvellous gallows conversions. I wouldn't give a fig for ninety nine out of a hundred of them. It may sometimes be exceedingly convenient, to be a desperate sinner for sixty years, and then turn saint when the race is nearly run, and the world has lost its charms. It is, however, cheap sainthood, and must be an inviting and agreeable doctrine, particularly to old, well-seasoned rogues. But my troubles are not at an end yet.

## REPORTS.

**Belfast: All Souls' Church.**—Harvest festival services were held on 16th October in All Souls' Church, Elmwood Avenue, which was beautifully decorated for the occasion. The preacher was the Rev. E. A. Voysey, M.A., who, in the course of a thoughtful sermon on "The Fruitfulness of Faith," based on the words "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." (Psalm cxxvi., 6), said the Bible, in spite of all its errors, was a very precious book, and to him never more precious than in its promises. There were a multitude of such promises, including the words of the text. Texts like these fill fainting souls with new life and energy. We all know that it is when we get depressed and disheartened about ourselves and our work that we need some friend to lean upon, some help from a source outside of ourselves over which we have no control, but without which we should have no power to fight against the things and persons that hinder us. And it is at such times that the majority of mankind instinctively fall back upon the Divine Succour which they feel somehow or other must be behind everything waiting only to be sought in order to be given. Sometimes the hopes of the husbandman were blighted by adverse seasons, and it was sometimes said that harvest thanksgiving services were a mockery. He disagreed with that, because it was not alone the fruits of the field that they ought to thank God for. At times of gloom and despair encouragement and hope came to the struggling soul from the words of the text. That was true in experience, only let them see that the seeds were those of good endeavour, of sweetness and light, and they might be sure that God would preserve them, and make them fruitful. What was true of the individual was true of the Church. They all had some special seeds that they regarded as good for everybody, and those that thought

alike combined into bodies. There was room for all seeds and all sowers, except the enemy that sowed tares instead of wheat. As a Church they were concerned with the sowing of the seeds of moral truth. Their mission of seed sowing might be carried out by other means than sermons. It was not ceremonial that made man holy; they need not put on anything outwardly as the sign of holiness, but have regard for the spirit. They must make no terms with wickedness. They must do their work not by scattering tracts about their theological views, but by making the world a better place to live in. The day would come when the man who placed his trust in God would come out on top; he would rise into a region of calm satisfaction, and the happiness of his soul would be his blessing for ever. At the evening service Rev. Mr. Voysey took as his subject "The Essential Thing," and, as in the morning, there was a large congregation. At both services the music was a special feature, appropriate hymns and anthems being sung, and there was a special collection on behalf of the choir fund.

**Belfast: York Street Church.**—The Annual Harvest Thanksgiving Services were held at the above Church on Sunday, the 16th ult. The Church was prettily decorated by the lady members; the pews, aisles and pulpit being beautifully decked with flowers, ferns and corn. What was of special interest, was the magnificent model of a corn stack, specially sent by Dromore friends. In addition to large quantities of flowers, corn and vegetables, supplied by members, gifts were kindly presented by Rosemary Street Church. The services both morning and evening were very well attended. The special feature of the evening was the service of song "Praise for Harvest," by Foxwell, splendidly rendered by an augmented choir, and which was highly appreciated by all present. The services were conducted by the minister, Rev. J. D. Davies.

**Ballyclare.**—On the 25th September, Rev. W. Fielding brought to a close a ministry of almost twenty-six years. At the end of his sermon he gave a brief account of his sojourn amongst us, and, like a wise counsellor, he showed us our faults, enumerating for our benefit the two faults which he thought we were guilty of, namely, lack of spirituality and lack of enthusiasm. At the conclusion of the service Mr. W. C. Forsythe intimated to the congregation and to the out-going minister that a presentation was about to take place, and asked them to keep their seats for a short time. Mr. Forsythe in a few words conveyed to Mr. and Mrs. Fielding the sincere regret of the congregation in parting with them and then called on Mrs. Bulmer to make the presentation; this worthy lady, in her own graceful manner handed over a purse of gold to Mr. and Mrs. Fielding, and was visibly affected when she expressed her sorrow at their departure. Mr. Fielding in tendering

his thanks to the congregation stated that both he and Mrs. Fielding would like to shake hands with each member. The congregation then passed sorrowfully out and whatever their faults might be in the matter of spirituality and enthusiasm, no one can say they were wanting in feeling at losing their esteemed pastor.

**Banbridge.**—Harvest Thanksgiving Services were held in the First Presbyterian (Non-Subscribing) Church, on Sunday, October 16th, and were of a most successful character. Excellent sermons were preached by the Rev. G. L. Phelps, of Holywood, and special music was rendered by the augmented choir, under the direction of the organist (Miss H. Bell). A feature of the services was the singing of Miss B. M'Kisack, of Belfast, who sang sacred solos which were greatly appreciated. The Church was tastefully decorated for the occasion, and there were large congregations, especially at the evening service, when there were between 600 and 700 people present, and the seating accommodation of the large building was taxed to its utmost.

**Cairncastle.**—On Sunday evening, 2nd Oct., a Harvest Service was held at the "Old Meeting House," the preacher being the Rev. Ellison A. Voysey, M.A., of All Souls' Church, Belfast. The text was Psalm 126 v. 6. The harvest hymns included one—"The Earth is Thine"—which was sung very sweetly by Miss Edith Erskine. Miss Isa M'Ninch of Larne played the organ, and her services were much appreciated. Several other friends from our Larne congregation had also shown a kind and much appreciated interest in the life of their Cairncastle brethren, by driving out in an omnibus to join in their thanksgiving. An offertory was taken up in aid of funds for re-painting the Meeting House. The decorations consisted principally of flowers and corn; the general effect was very pleasing, being considerably enhanced by the addition of candles to the ordinary illumination of lamps. Notwithstanding heavy rain there was a very good congregation.

**Crumlin.**—Harvest Thanksgiving Service was held here on Sunday, the 9th ult., and continued on the following evening. Rev. E. Lockett of Banbridge preached excellent sermons on Sunday, and Rev. S. E. Bowen preached at the Monday evening service. Large congregations assembled at each service. The Church was beautifully decorated.

**Downpatrick.**—Bicentenary Celebrations.—Re-opening services will be held in the Old Meeting House, on Sunday, 6th November. Rev. Wm. Napier, President of the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church, will preach in the morning, at 11-30, and Rev. M. S. Dunbar in the evening at 7. As the outcome of the Bazaar, held almost a year ago, the above Meeting House, has been thoroughly and substantially renovated, and should assist in arousing a new interest and loyalty among its

worshippers. The Church has behind it 200 years of a noble past and notable traditions, and while gratefully remembering this, we should also remember "the highest honour we can pay to the past is wisely to use it in order to stimulate the progress of the future."

**Glenarm.**—Harvest Thanksgiving Services were held in the Old Presbyterian (Unitarian) Meeting House, on Sunday, 16th October, at 3 o'clock, and also on Monday evening at 7 p.m. The preachers were the Rev. J. A. Miskimmin, B.A. (pastor loci) and the Rev. S. Evans Bowen, of Crumlin, whose practical addresses were listened to by large and appreciative audiences. Hymns appropriate to the harvest season were well rendered by the choir. Miss M. Barnes, of Greyabbey, gave great pleasure to all present by her rendering of the solos: "He wipes the tear from every eye," and "Lead kindly light." The Old Meeting House was tastefully decorated for the occasion by the young people of the congregation and presented a very attractive appearance.

**Greyabbey.**—Harvest Thanksgiving Service was held here on Friday evening, 7th October. The weather being fine a good congregation assembled to hear the Rev. Matthew Watkins, the newly-ordained minister of Moneyrea. The address was highly appreciated and was listened to with close attention. Miss Barnes sang in her usual pleasing manner the solo "Lead kindly light." The services were continued on following Sunday, when the *pastor loci*, Rev. T. Munn, was the preacher morning and evening. In the evening the Meeting House was crowded in every part with an attentive congregation. The Church was beautifully decorated with fruit, flowers, and other emblems of the harvest.

**Hollywood.**—On Sunday, October 16th, and Monday, October 17th, most successful Harvest Thanksgiving Services were held in the First Presbyterian (Non-Subscribing) Church. The preacher on Sunday was the Rev. Edgar Lockett of Banbridge, who gave two very earnest and helpful harvest sermons, and on Monday the minister of the Church, the Rev. G. Leonard Phelps, gave an excellent address. The Church has just undergone some important structural changes, the pulpit now being in the centre with the choir at either side of the organ, and this new arrangement, which is a great improvement, lends itself to much more effective and elaborate decoration. The Church looked extremely well with its seasonable decorations of corn, flowers, fruit, and vegetables, and it reflected much credit on the large band of workers who were busy all day on the previous Saturday. On Sunday morning there was a large congregation, which included the Hollywood Boy Scouts and the Fourth Company from Belfast, who marched down specially for the occasion. On Sunday and Monday evenings the Church was crowded, and there were many present from

other congregations. The choir, which was augmented by friends from Belfast and Lisburn, gave several anthems on Sunday, and on Monday the Sacred Cantata "Song of Thanksgiving," by Maunder was beautifully rendered, the soloists being Mrs. S. McCrum, Miss L. Murphy, Mr. James Shannon and Mr. S. Green. Much credit is due to Mr. W. J. Harvey, the organist, who spared no trouble to make all go off well, and sincere thanks are due to him and to Mr. J. H. M'Bratney, A.R.C.O., organist, of Lisburn Cathedral, who kindly presided at the organ on the Monday evening.

**Larne: The late Mr. James Adrain.**—After a painful illness extending over several months this widely known and much esteemed gentleman passed to his rest on 5th ult., at his residence, Templecorran House, Ballycarry. A pupil of the Rev. John Compton, of Raloo, he became in time a member of what is perhaps the noblest of all professions, viz., that of teacher, and for some few years exercised his calling in Kilwaughter. Subsequently he became associated with the late Robert Nelson, agent to the late Charles M'Garel, in the management of Magheramorne estate and Lime works. There for many years, during which the properties changed hands more than once, he discharged his duties to the satisfaction of owners, tenants, and customers alike, until a few years ago when he retired to his fine residence in Ballycarry to enjoy a well-earned leisure and repose. On 8th ult., his mortal remains were conveyed to their last resting place in the quaint secluded burying ground of his native parish of Raloo, accompanied by a vast concourse of people, including former pupils, many of whom are occupying prominent positions as professional and business men, farmers, etc., and of the public generally. Mr. Adrain was a clever business man, straightforward, kindly, humorous, and cheery withal. He belonged both by descent and conviction to the Unitarian Church and was connected with Raloo, Larne, and Ballycarry congregations. He leaves a widow, two daughters and one son (Dr. Adrain, of Larne), as well as many friends in Down and Antrim. It is sad to note that since the foregoing appeared first in print his daughter, Mary, also passed over to the majority. The end in her case came on Thursday, 13th, the interment taking place in the family burying-ground, Raloo, on Saturday, 15th ult., exactly a week after that of her father.

**Mountpottinger.**—Mountpottinger Church has suffered a severe loss through the death of Miss Davidson, of Knock, Belfast. She belonged to a family which has been associated with non-subscribing principles in Ireland for many years. For more than 45 years she was a member of Mountpottinger and until quite recently was actively engaged in Sunday School work. She maintained her interest in both Church and School to the end.

In the course of a memorial address on Sunday morning, Oct. 16th, the Rev. J. Worthington spoke of her loyalty to the Church and her fidelity to the principles of nonsubscription. They had lost, they all felt, not merely a member of their religious fellowship, but a personal friend. Miss Davidson was a woman of exceptional force of character, yet eminently approachable. She combined tenderness and strength in an unusual degree. Although she had to endure long periods of suffering in the course of her life, she always maintained a cheerful and optimistic religious faith. She took a keen interest in the Agricultural Co-operative movement in Ireland, and served in the Temperance and Sunday Schools Committees of the Non-Subscribing Church. Her chief hobby was gardening; her own garden at Knock was much admired.

**Templepatrick.** — Harvest Thanksgiving Service was held in our Church here on Sunday evening, the 2nd October. For the first time since these services were held the weather was distinctly unfavourable, the rain coming down not in the ordinary kind of way, but as if out of buckets. Our village was flooded and many on their way to Church returned home again. In spite of this, however, the Church, which was beautifully decorated, was comfortably filled with worshippers, and they who had braved the downpour were rewarded by hearing the splendid singing of Mrs. James Moore, who sang for us "Come unto Him" (Handel), and "O, Divine Redeemer" (Gounod). The congregational singing was as usual on these occasions, excellent. Miss Getty presided at the organ and Rev. A. Turner led in the devotions and preached.

### ECHOES.

The English Church Congress held at Cambridge during the closing days of September, had before it the problem of the unfit. At present, the birth-rate among the healthy and provident, is stationary, while that among the improvident, dissolute, slum population is high. If these conditions continue, the consequences eventually must be serious indeed. At present the unfit, through Christian philanthropy, are virtually encouraged to increase at the expense and to the detriment of the provident capables. If the fit decline, and the unfit increase, the helpless stock of humanity at some not very distant future, will be a very heavy burden to bear. In view of this contingency, it is recommended that legislation should be brought about to segregate the unfit from the fit, secure their kindly maintenance, but prevent parenthood among them. This step would lead to their gradual diminution. Some very plain home-truths were spoken at the Congress by a lady, a member of the Royal Commission on the care of the feeble-minded, which elicited loud and prolonged applause, showing, though the

subject was a delicate one, that she had dealt with it in a brave and sensible manner. It really comes to this: Are the provident to allow themselves to be oppressed by the improvident and dissolute? Are the strong and healthy to allow themselves to be outnumbered by the feeble and unhealthy? Are the capables to allow themselves to be outnumbered and borne down by the unfit, the incapable and feeble-minded?

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It was hoped and believed by many that the advent of old age pensions would lead to a reduction in the numbers receiving poor relief, indoor and outdoor. But the first years' experience—from the end of March, 1909, to the end of March, 1910—has been disappointing, there having been little, or no, diminution. Surely there will be some decrease during the current year.

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There are in the United Kingdom, but mainly in England, 1,500 Brotherhood Centres, with 500,000 members. These religious societies profess to be undenominational and non-theological. Is it probable that they will remain so, after being started by distinctly denominational congregations and holding their meetings in school-rooms and halls belonging to those congregations? I am content to "wait and see."

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The London correspondent of *The Northern Whig*, some time since said the complaint of empty churches still continued, and that many views were offered as remedies for the evil. Where there are preachers of exceptional ability, the complaint does not apply. But a preacher of exceptional power cannot be found for every church in the land. Besides, there are many duties a minister is called upon to perform in addition to preaching, which preachers of exceptional power could not perhaps perform as well as an ordinary minister. Sunday concerts, cycling, golf, and weekend excursions, were thought by some to be sufficient. But these apply to the summer months only. I still believe the want of real interest in religion and religious institutions, to be one of the main causes. There may be others, but they are not partial in their apportionment, like most of those named.

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It seems to have long been thought that a man's services to a political or religious party in the State, should be regarded as sufficient qualification for his appointment as a Justice of the Peace. What connection politics and theology have with a sense of right between man and man, it is hard to say. Because a man is a Liberal or Conservative, a Churchman, Presbyterian or Roman Catholic, does that fact imply that he is educated, intelligent, has a trained mind, can weigh evidence, and in a general sense, eliminate truth from error, discriminate between right and wrong, and weigh motives? By no means. The system which has hitherto prevailed in regard to this

subject is ridiculous in its very crudeness. It is gratifying, therefore, to learn something of the sentiments of the Lord Chancellor lately enunciated in the House of Lords concerning the subject. In reference to the Report of the Committee appointed to look into this matter and recommend, he said, "It is an event of great importance that a Commission composed of all parties and opinions whose authority cannot be doubted, should have unanimously declared that all concerned ought to decline to recognise political or religious opinions as any ground for qualification, or disqualification." Men of strict integrity, sobriety, unbiassed judgment, of general intelligence, and held in public respect, are men for the magisterial office. If they cannot come up to such a standard, their appointment is surely a mistake.—W.S.S.

#### ITEMS RECEIVED TOO LATE FOR CLASSIFICATION.

History repeats itself. Fifty years ago the late Bishop Colenso was questioned about some of the awkward statements in the Pentateuch by a Zulu whom he was teaching. This led him to look into matters more closely than he had previously done, the result being his transformation into a New Theologian. For this he had to suffer deposition. The leaven of the New Theology has produced a crisis in a Sunderland Congregational Sunday School, where a youth, like the puzzled Zulu, asked his teacher which he was to believe—what he heard in his class, or what he heard from the pulpit? This placed the teacher in a predicament, which led to the resignation of his office, for he was a New Theologian. Then the minister was posed by a lady teacher with the question as to whether New Theologians should cease to be teachers in that Sunday School, to which he replied, Yes. The result is that fourteen teachers have resigned their duties, and between thirty and forty persons their membership of the congregation! The minister appears to be a thoroughly consistent man. He prefers a reduction in the membership to theological chafing and antagonism, and it is said, there is not the least unfriendliness on either side.

**Orphan Society.**—A quarterly meeting of the governors of the above Society was held in the Central Hall, Belfast, on 20th October, Rev. W. S. Smith in the chair, the other governors present being—Revs. E. Lockett, G. J. Slipper, H. J. Rossington, with Messrs. J. Davidson and Thomas Henderson; Rev. A. Turner, assistant secretary, was also present. With one exception, the orphans already on the fund were re-elected, and applications were considered from twenty-three orphans, seven of whom were subsequently withdrawn from election. Fifteen orphans were admitted to the benefits of the election, viz.—M., W. J., M. J., and C. Espie, of Downpatrick; H. E. and V. Megaw, of Newry; E. H., J., E., S., and E. M'Cormick, Comber; S. and J. Quigley, Killinchy; and J. F. Scott, Belfast. There are at present sixty-nine orphans on the fund. A very considerable amount of correspondence was read and routine business transacted, which brought the meeting to a close.

**Newry.**—Harvest Thanksgiving Services were held in this church on a recent Sunday, before large congregations at both morning and evening services. The church was prettily and effectively decorated with corn, fruit, flowers, and plants. The choir, under the direction of Miss L. M'Combe, rendered special music, and the preacher was the Rev. Geo. J. Slipper, pastor loci, whose discourses were appropriate to the occasion. Basing his morning's discourse upon Psalm 65, at the 11th verse, he spoke of the need of a deeper consciousness of God's love and providence in all the affairs of life; and the evening discourse was an exposition of the miracle of harvest. The services were continued on Monday evening, when the Rev. G. J. Slipper again preached an impressive sermon.

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